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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [PREL](#) [PO](#)
SUBJECT: PORTUGAL SPRING REVIEW FOR SUSPENSION OF TITLE III
OF THE LIBERTAD ACT

REF: SECSTATE 52541

Classified By: Dana M. Brown, Political-Econ Officer, Embassy
Lisbon Reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (U) Portuguese MFA's Officer Director for Latin America Joao Batista confirmed that Portugal's relationship with Cuba remained unchanged. He responded to reftel questions with updated information for the Title III Suspension of Libertad Act report.

¶2. (C) The Portuguese hold firmly to the principles of protecting human rights and promoting transition to democracy in Cuba. Batista welcomed information on the President's remarks in observance of the Day of Solidarity on May 21. He explained that the GOP had not marked the day since it did not want to direct criticism specifically against Cuba when other nations were also guilty of similar human rights abuses. While the GOP continues to call for Cuba to protect human rights, Batista allowed that Portugal would be willing to consider removing the EU's suspended 2003 sanctions completely to encourage Cuban progress if others in the EU suggested it.

¶3. (C) Economic activity between Portugal and Cuba is very limited and mainly centered on the tourism and import/export sectors. Batista said he did not know of any Portuguese companies that had significant business in Cuba. The Portuguese did not initiate any new trade agreements with Cuba over the last year and Batista confirmed that Portugal has not had any active cultural exchange programs with Cuba since the imposition of the EU's sanctions. There have been no high-level bilateral visits over the last six months.

¶4. (C) Comment: Batista underscored that Portugal viewed the human rights situation to remain unchanged under Raul Castro and that Portugal's policy also had not changed. Although Batista's comments implied a "flexibility" in discussions regarding sanctions in June's working group meeting on Latin America (COLAT), it was clear that Portugal would not lead the call to remove sanctions. Portugal would at most support other nations (such as Spain) if it was clear that a majority would agree to remove sanctions. End comment.
Stephenson